User's Guide to Getting the Most out of the Cal-Access Advanced Reports/Searchable Database

Introduction

The Advanced Reports/Searchable Database is most useful when the user is seeking cumulative information for a specific entity, or to produce summary types of cumulative reports. The system is limited by the quality of the data coming into it, however, so there can be no guarantee that every data element fitting the description query will be captured and reported back in the response. As edits against the electronic filings can be tightened, the database's integrity and comprehensiveness will improve.

In Phase 1 of this system's rollout (on July 31, 2003), users were given utility tools for searching contributors by recipient and donor's names, searching late contributions received or made, searching late independent expenditures, and searching expenditures by expenditure type.

Phase 2 now provides several types of summary reports – reports on how much was raised, spent, and ending cash balances reported by contest, by candidate or ballot measure, and by political party. From these summary reports, additional details can be researched by simply clicking on the View Details column magnifying glass icon. Phase two also provides information about lobbying activity – searching employers by category and searching lobbying firms. Finally, a tool is also provided to search for treasurers or responsible officers connected to these filings.

General Help Tips and Information

It is recommended that you always enter query names in a variety of ways to ensure you get all the data you are seeking. Since data comes from electronic filings, if the names are spelled incorrectly, or entered inconsistently from filing to filing, the searchable database does not assume they are the same entity.

When a query returns a finding, **click on the returns to dig deeper** into the report. Clicking on that filer's link will take you to the filer's general information page in the pre-existing Cal-Access web site.

This is what we call the "filer's world" and provides access to a variety of options for seeing the filings.

At the bottom of the screen that displays the results of the query, there is a **"Show All"** button. Clicking on this button displays the details of the filings from which the results are derived. In addition, on some screens, the right-hand column of the results page contains a **magnifying glass icon** that you can click to see the background data relating to the query response being displayed.

Help tips appear if you click on any of the search criteria headings, and provide useful explanations. You are encouraged to read them.

Pages return data with **columns that are able to be sorted** by clicking on the header.

Dates should be entered using the mm/dd/yyyy format.

The **default settings** for contributor codes and contribution types are all-inclusive – Individual, Recipient Committee, Other, Political Party, and Small Contributor Committee for contributor codes, and Monetary, Loan, and Non-monetary for contribution types. You can unselect any which do not apply to your query by clicking on the checkmarks next to those you wish to eliminate.

Most search fields are optional, so experiment to determine which variables provide you the responses tailored to your specific needs.

Search returns will be limited to 1,000 lines. If this proves insufficient for most queries, we will look into ways to increase the limit. Let us know if the current setting is a consistent problem for you.

When using the **Candidate Summary Search**, the drop-down boxes will only allow **choices beginning with the November 2002 General Election.** This is because of candidate committees being able to be used for different races prior to the effective date of Prop. 34 and the termination of committee requirements subsequently enacted in regulations by the Fair Political Practices Commission.

Download Options: each query return screen offers the option to download the data. Click the "Download" button at the bottom of the screen and you can download to an Excel spreadsheet, a Delimited Text format, or a PDF Report format.

If you have problems using the site after reading this guide, please contact the Secretary of State’s Press Office at (916) 653-6575.

What do you want to see?

Who is contributing money to state-level campaigns.

GENERAL QUERY – TO WHOM HAS AN ENTITY GIVEN?

Search option to use: Contributor Search (Who's Giving)
How to use it:

- Enter the name of the contributor in the contributor field; if you know the ID number, enter that instead or in addition
- If you desire to limit the timeframe in which to search, or to restrict the search to contributions over a certain amount, enter date ranges and amount ranges in the appropriate boxes

The data for this query comes from all electronically filed Form 460 Schedules A (monetary contributions), B (loans), and C (non-monetary contributions). If the recipient has not reported the contribution, it will not appear in this search section. You may need to search Late Contributions as well. This data is intentionally kept separate because after it has been reported as a late contribution, it will appear on the next regularly scheduled comprehensive filing, and to merge the data would create duplicate reporting of the same dollar amounts.

In addition, if your search returns more than one recipient, click on the contributor's name or scroll to the bottom of the page and click the "show all" button to see more information about the contributor.

Search option to use: Late Contributions Received and/or Late Contributions Made
How to use it:

- If searching during a period <u>other than 16 days before the state election involved</u>, you will only find the contributor if the recipient has electronically reported the late contribution.
- If searching <u>during the 16 days prior to the involved state election</u>, you may search under either Late Contributions Received or Late Contributions Made
- For a <u>Late Contributions Received</u> search, enter the name of the contributor in the third line of the screen, leaving the filer information blank

- Enter the date range of this late reporting period you wish to search, and amount ranges if you wish to restrict the contribution amounts provided
- For a Late Contributions Made search, enter the contributor/filer's name in the first line of the screen
- Enter the date range of the late period you wish to search, and contribution dollar value amount if you wish to restrict the contribution search

The data from these searches is derived from electronically filed Forms 497. Note that only the recipient of the contribution must report contributions of $1,000 or more within 24 hours during the 90 days until 16 days before the election; both the donor and the recipient must e-file contributions of $1,000 or more during the final 16 days of the campaign. In addition, contributions of $5,000 or more received outside these 90 days must be reported electronically by the recipient within 10 business days of receipt. Knowing these filing requirements will assist you in determining how to focus your query.

GENERAL QUERY – FROM WHOM HAS A CANDIDATE OR BALLOT MEASURE RECEIVED CONTRIBUTIONS?

Search option to use: Contributor Search (Who's Receiving)
How to use it:

- Enter the name of the candidate or ballot measure receiving the contribution on the first line of the screen
- If you desire to limit the timeframe in which to search, or to restrict the search to contributions over a certain amount, enter date ranges and amount ranges in the appropriate boxes
- If your search brings back too much data to display, you will be asked to narrow your search; you can do multiple searches to obtain the full report

The data for this report is derived from the electronically filed Form 460. If the recipient has not reported receiving the donation from the contributor on this form, you will not get any results from this query. You may be more successful using the Late Contributions Made or Late Contributions Received queries, described above.

SPECIFIC QUERY – HAS AN ENTITY GIVEN TO A SPECIFIC CANDIDATE OR BALLOT MEASURE?

Search option to use: **Any of the contribution and late contributions options can be used**, depending on what information you are seeking. Refer to general instructions above. To get the exact response, however, you will want to tailor your query to limit the search to the specific entity you are researching.

How to use it:

- Remember that the data will be pulled from the recipient's filings so tailor your queries with that frame of reference in mind.
- In the Contributor Search (Who's Giving) query, you will enter the contributor's name on the first line
- In the Late Contributions Received query, enter the contributor's name on the third line, and the recipient's name on the first line
- In the Late Contributions Made query, enter the contributor's name on the first line and the recipient's name on the third line
- You can always search by ID number and/or name, if you know this information, or include it in the query along with the name(s) of the entities sought
- The Contributor Search (Who's Receiving) method is the least efficient option to use when looking for a specific contributor's activity, but it can be done if you enter the recipient's name on the first line and then search through the list returned for the query

Who is making expenditures in state-level campaigns?

GENERAL QUERY – WHO HAS MADE OR BEEN THE TARGET OF LATE INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURES

Search option to use: **Late Independent Expenditures**

How to use it:

- You can search either by the target of the expenditure or the maker of the expenditure, or both
- If you want to see if a late independent expenditure has been made directed at a state candidate or ballot measure, you can enter the candidate/measure name on the first or fourth line, respectively.

- You can select if you want to only see late independent expenditures in support of the candidate or measure, in opposition to them, or both; you can also limit the date and amount of expenditure activity, if you desire
- If you want to see who has made late independent expenditures, you can do a general query defined by a date range, or you can enter specific information about the contributor

This search is limited to data electronically filed on the Form 496 Late Independent Expenditure Report. These reports are filed during the 90 days leading up to the state election.

GENERAL QUERY – HOW MUCH MONEY HAS BEEN SPENT ON RADIO OR TELEVISION ADVERTISING, CAMPAIGN CONSULTANTS, PRINTED LITERATURE OR OTHER TYPES OF EXPENSES?

Search option to use: Expenditure Code Search
How to use it:

- There are 27 different expenditure codes listed on the Form 460 Recipient Committee disclosure form. You can find out how much is being spent by category by selecting one of the 27 choices from the drop-down box on the screen.
- If you want an overall picture of campaign spending in a specific category, you can query by the expenditure code and by entering a date range
- If you want to know how much a particular candidate or ballot measure has spent on an expenditure category, select the expenditure code, and enter the filer's name on the third line
- There are look-up menus for ballot measure, office sought and candidate name to assist you in identifying the exact filer you are researching
- On most forms, the dates for expenditures are not required to be provided. You may wish to define your search to encompass an entire reporting period that would have been covered on set reporting deadlines for state elections. Filing deadlines and periods covered for those submissions are available on both the Secretary of State and the FPPC web sites.

SUMMARY REPORTS FOR STATE CANDIDATES, BALLOT MEASURES AND POLITICAL PARTIES

If you are searching for a grand total of how much money was raised or spent in a particular race, this is the query function to use. In addition, within this option you can develop a list of the top 100 contributors to the committees whose data is included in the summary report.

GENERAL QUERY – HOW MUCH MONEY WAS SPENT IN THE LAST ELECTION FOR A STATEWIDE OR STATE-LEVEL CANDIATE OR BALLOT MEASURE?

Search option to use: Summary Reports Candidates/Ballot Measures

How to use it:

- Select the option you want (Ballot Measures or Candidates)
- Enter the contest (race or ballot measure) you wish to see and the election date and click the search button
- The ballot measure summary report will provide a total of contributions received and expenditures made to support and to oppose the measure
- The candidate summary data report will provide the total of contributions received and expenditures made, the ending cash balance reported by all candidates in the contest selected, and the jurisdiction (statewide office, State Senate, State Assembly, Board of Equalization, and district numbers, where applicable); the view detail icon produces a list of the committees controlled by candidates within the race being viewed, and also provides the candidate's political party affiliation.
- To see the data that is included in the cumulative figure provided, click on the View Details magnifying glass icon in the right-hand column
- This screen will then display the summary data report details, which includes the filer committee name and total contribution and total expenditure amounts for each filer committee that was included in the cumulative total.

- Clicking on the filer/committee names listed in this detail data report will provide a list of the Top 100 Single Contributors found for the measure or candidate committee.
- These searches are restricted to election cycles as provided in a drop-down box at the entry screen.
- Data for the candidate summary reports can only be extracted beginning with the November 2002 General Election filings because of the effective date of Proposition 34's provisions relating to statewide candidates and the FPPC's regulations surrounding carrying contributions across election cycles.
- Ballot measure summary reports can be searched back to the March 2000 Primary Election, although there were fewer electronic filers prior to July 2000 when the mandatory electronic filing threshold dropped from $100,000 to $50,000 for campaign filers.

GENERAL QUERY – HOW MUCH MONEY DID THE POLITICAL PARTIES RAISE AND SPEND IN A PARTICULAR ELECTION YEAR?

Search option to use: Summary Reports, Candidates/Ballot Measures section, Political Parties

How to use it:

- Click on the query option labeled "Political Parties" and enter an election year or date range
- The summary data report will list the political party committees that are registered as state committees and will provide their cumulative contributions received and expenditures made, as well as their reported ending cash balance for the date or election you designed
- Clicking on the filer/committee party name will produce a detail data report similar to those produced for candidates and ballot measures, including the list of the top 100 single contributors for the specified time period

QUERY – HOW DO I FIND OUT HOW MUCH MONEY HAS BEEN SPENT ON LOBBYING ACTIVITY WITHIN A CERTAIN CATEGORY OF INTERESTS?

Search option to use: Summary Reports, Lobbying, Employer Category

How to use it:

- There are 19 interest codes into which lobbying employers designate themselves; a drop-down box provides these category listings for you
- Select the category for which you wish to see figures, and indicate which legislative session you wish to view; you may also select which of the quarterly filings you wish researched; the default is all 8 quarters for a two-year legislative session
- The search will produce a listing of all lobbyist employers and the cumulative payments made by them for the specified session and quarters and the total amount of payments received
- A magnifying glass icon in the right column allows you to click to see the payment break-downs for each employer that was included in the interest category you searched

Data for these reports is derived from the electronically filed Form 635 Lobbyist Employers reports.

QUERY – HOW DO I FIND OUT HOW MUCH MONEY HAS BEEN PAID TO REGISTERED STATE-LEVEL LOBBYING FIRMS?

Search option to use: Summary Reports, Lobbying, Lobbying Firms

How to use it:

- To see payments to all firms for a specific legislative session, click on the appropriate session from the drop-down box; you may designate a single firm if you desire, by typing in the name of the firm

The listing delivered by this search provides the name of each registered firm and the total payments received for the designed period; a magnifying glass in the right-hand column allows the user to see the filings from which the totals were derived

- Clicking on the name of the firm will open a separate window from the Cal-Access system where general information and access to electronic filings are provided

Data for this summary report is derived from electronically filed Forms 625 Lobbying Firms.

GENERAL QUERY – IS THERE A WAY TO DETERMINE WHO THE TREASURER OR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER IS FOR A CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE OR LOBBYING FILER?

Search option to use: Officers, Treasurer/Responsible Officer

How to use it:

- In the line for treasurer name, enter the name you are searching for, providing both first and last names whenever possible
- The search will return a list with the filer name, filer ID, type of form filed by the treasurer, date the filing was submitted by such treasurer, the treasurer name, and period covered by the report
- Clicking on the filer name (organization, lobbyist employer, committee name, major donor name, etc.) will open a separate window from the Cal-Access system where general information and access to electronic filings are provided

- State law prohibits the Secretary of State from providing the street address and building number for filers, with the exception of lobbyists. Lobbyist information is available from the Cal-Access section of this web site.
- Data is available from January 2000 to the present, for electronic filers who meet certain activity thresholds. Campaign filers with $100,000 or more of activity to disclose had to begin electronically filing in January 2000; the activity threshold dropped to $50,000 in July of that year. Lobbying activity was electronically filed for those with $100,000 or more of activity to report between January and July of 2000, and the threshold dropped for

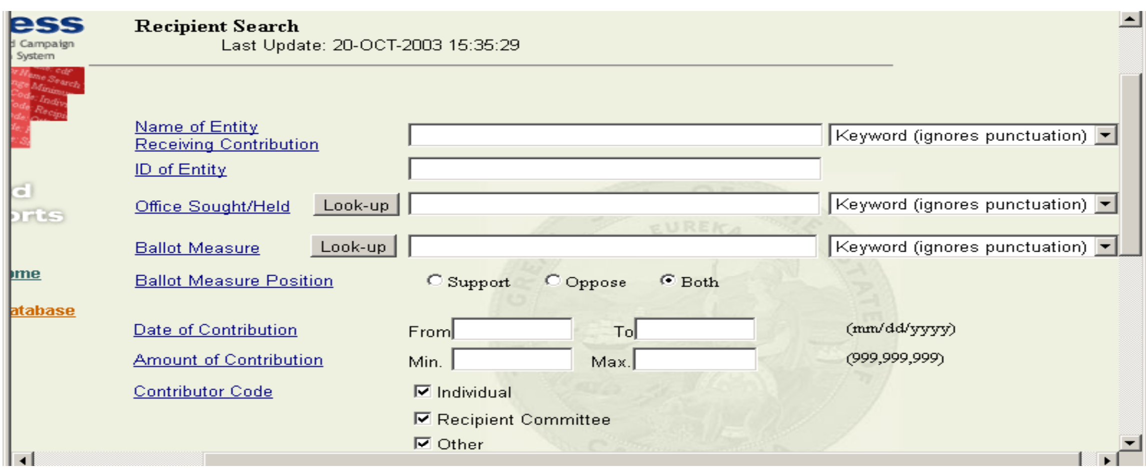
them on July 1, 2000 to $5,000 of activity triggering mandatory electronic filing.

Comments and other suggestions about this searchable database feature are welcome. Please e-mail us at prdwebmail@ss.ca.gov to offer helpful ideas.

Examples of screens

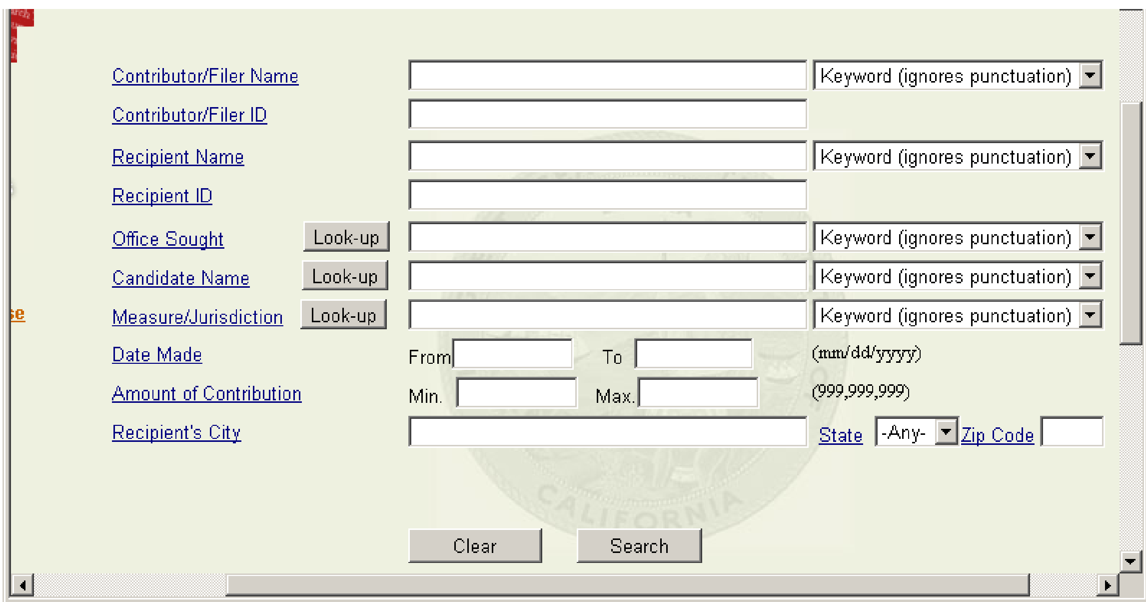
Contributors Search (Who's Giving)

Contributors Search (Who's Receiving)

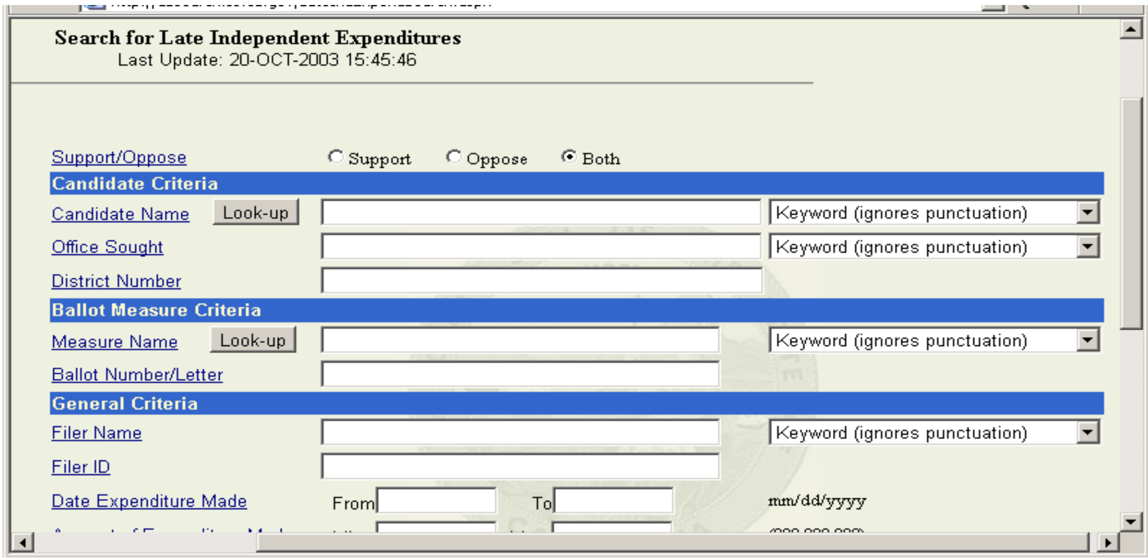


Late Contributions Received Search

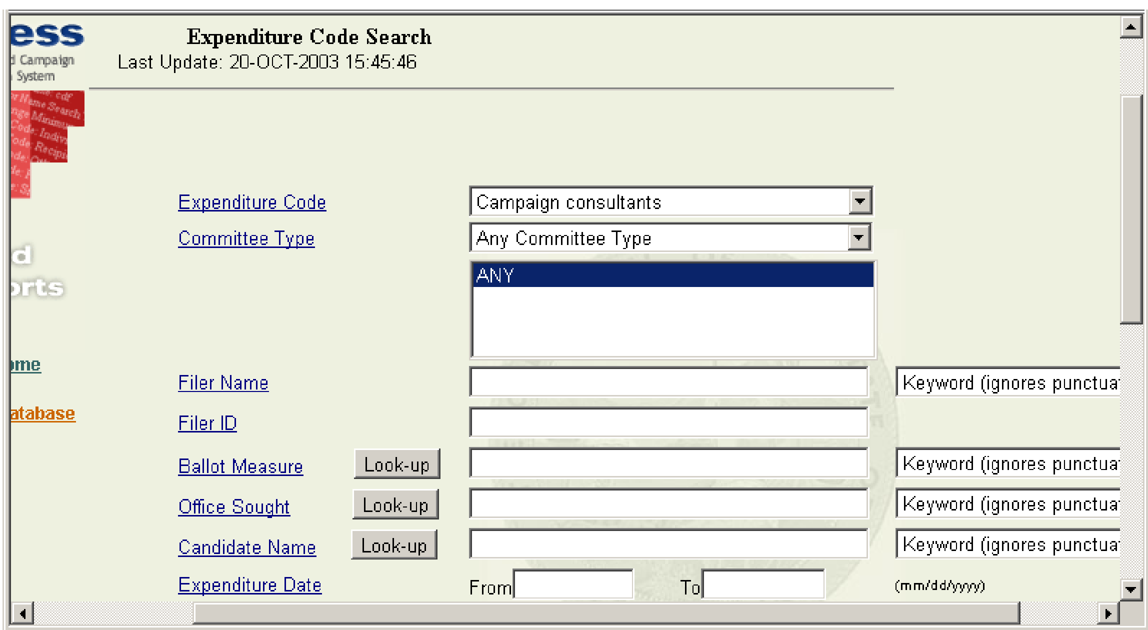
Late Contributions Made Search



Late Independent Expenditures



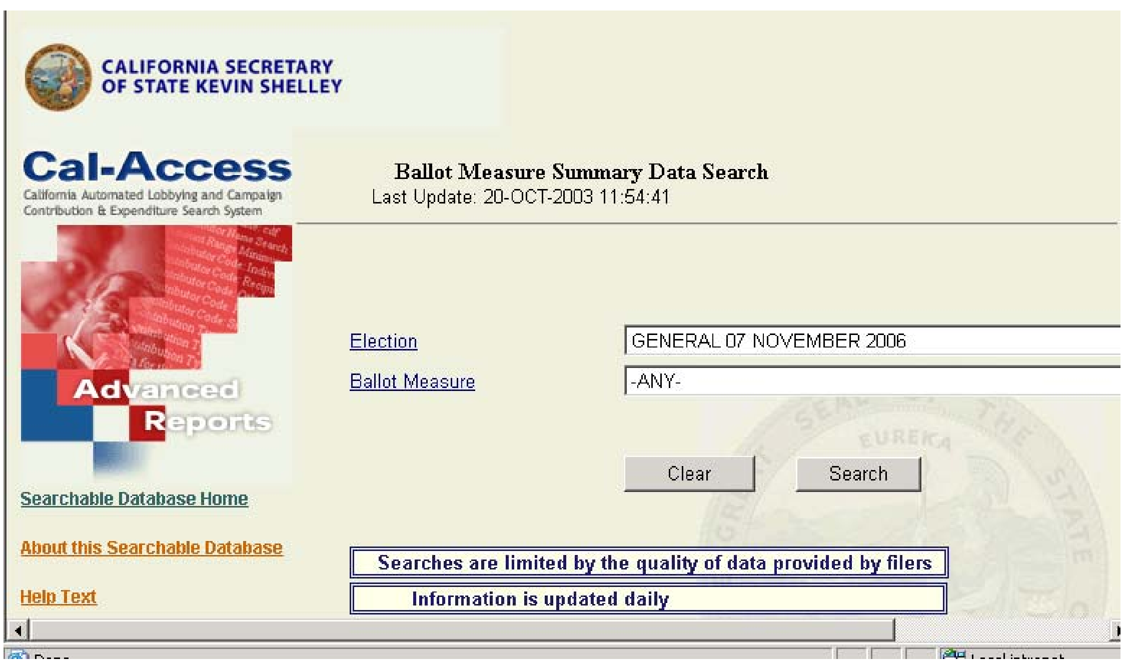
Expenditure Code Search



Show All button

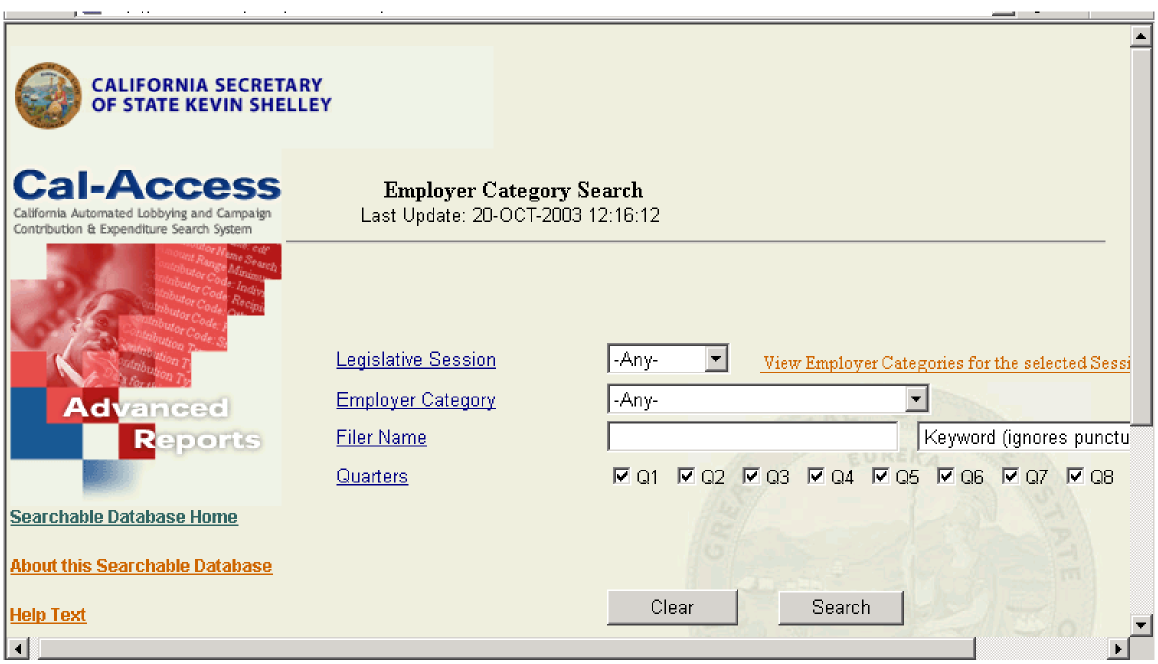
Candidate Summary Data Search

Ballot Measure Summary Data Search

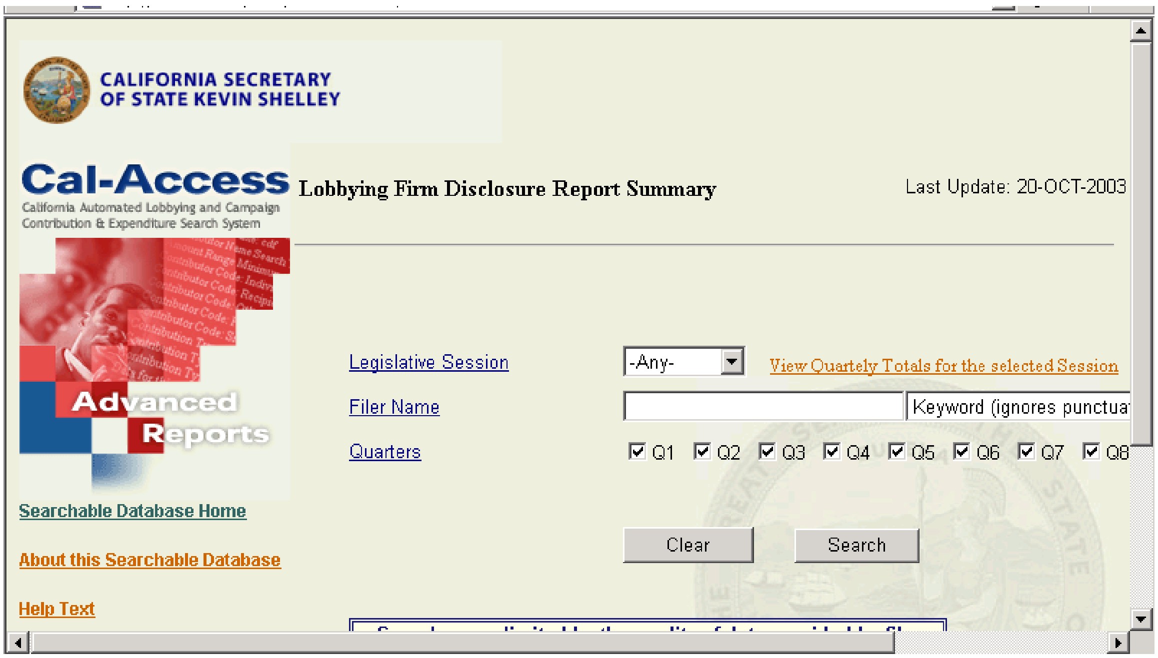


Political Party Summary Data Search

Employer Category Search



Lobbying Firm Disclosure Report Summary



Treasurer/Responsible Officer Search